

F. B. I. HARASSED A LEFTIST PARTY

Documents Show 10-Year
Campaign of Disruption
of Socialist Workers

By NICHOLAS M. HORROCK
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WASHINGTON, March 18—The Federal Bureau of Investigation harassed the Socialist Workers party for a decade with efforts to have members dismissed from their jobs, leaky to news media of unsavory items about their personal lives and attempts to encourage police agencies to press prosecutions, newly released bureau documents show.

As a result of a court order in a civil suit brought in Federal District Court in New York, the Federal Bureau of Investigation was compelled last week to release 3,138 pages of internal documents to the party and its youth arm, the Young Socialist Alliance.

It is one of the largest disclosures of internal F.B.I. workings in the history of the bureau and probably the most revealing set of documents since the theft of F.B.I. documents in Media, Pa., in 1971, laying bare bureau operations in Pennsylvania. The papers were made available to The New York Times today.

The documents have also been made available to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence headed by Senator Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho, a Socialist Workers source confirmed.

The carton of papers sketched 31 years of bureau attention to the Socialist Workers party that included detailed investigations of virtually every offi-

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cer or official the 2,500-member party ever had.

It also included 573 pages of documents on 41 operations of the bureau's Counter-intelligence Program against the party. The documents describe Cointelpro as trying to "disrupt" party activities and harass party members and their families.

A spokesman said the F.B.I. declined to comment on the questions raised by the documents because it involved a matter still in litigation. The rationale for the bureau's unusual attention to the Socialist Workers party could not be learned. The party was never publicly linked to the violence of the antiwar years or money and control from Communist nations abroad.

Despite three decades of intensive investigation and at least one period—from 1961 to 1971—of covert efforts to destroy the party and frighten its members, there is no indication that the bureau brought any charges. Two party spokesmen, Catherine Perkus and Syd Stapleton, said that neither the party nor the youth group had been the subject of a Federal prosecution since several cases in 1945.

Sources within the Department of Justice confirmed that they had "no memory" of any Federal prosecutions of the party or its membership within the last two decades.

Most of the investigations of the party and its members appeared to have been conducted under the authority of Federal statutes covering rebellion and insurrection; seditious conspiracy advocating the overthrow of the Government; the Internal Security Act of 1950 and the Communist Control Act of 1954.

Portions of two of the main acts relied upon in the F.B.I. investigation as late as 1973, the McCarran and the Smith acts, had been declared unconstitutional. There appeared to be no legal justification for the Cointelpro techniques. In a report on Cointelpro issued last fall by then Attorney General William B. Saxbe, many of the techniques appeared to be illegal.

Thus, it was the 573 pages on "disruption" of the Socialist Workers party that remained the most startling. The documents indicate that one of the earliest operations began in the fall of 1961. It was aimed at John Clarence Franklin, then the party's candidate for Borough President of Man-

hattan in New York City.

The papers indicate that the bureau discovered a record of criminal convictions in the files of the Albany, N. Y., Police Department that it believed to be Mr. Franklin's. The New York office of the bureau recommended that the record given secretly to F.B.I. contacts in the press for publication.

In a cable from Washington, under the auspices of the Director of the F.B.I., the bureau gave this response:

"This suggestion is an excellent example of the type desired by the bureau under the disruption program. The bureau is pleased to note that the suggestion was well thought out and it is felt that if future suggestions are submitted with the same amount of preparation and planning, this program will be exceedingly successful."

In a bureau cable dated Nov. 8, 1961, the New York field office took credit for planting the Franklin police record in a column called "On The Town," written by Charles McHarry in The New York Daily News.

"The attention of (blank) was directed to this item on 11/7/61, without, of course, revealing the bureau as being the source," the F.B.I. cable said.

Jack Metcalfe, a spokesman for The Daily News, said the paper would have "no immediate comment" but the matter was being looked into.

The attempt to discredit Socialist Worker political candidates cropped up routinely in the documents. They show that the bureau mailed an anonymous letter on Clifton Deberry, a candidate for Mayor of New York in 1964, which said he had been convicted in Chicago for nonsupport of his first wife and raised questions about the legitimacy of his current marriage.

The letters were mailed to The New York Times, The Daily News, The Journal-American and The New York television outlets of C.B.S. and N.G.C., but there is no indication that any of these organizations used the material. Indeed, bureau documents show that agents were disturbed because the material had not been used.

On Oct. 29, 1965, the New York office reported to Washington: "Since the N.Y.C. elections will be held 11/2/65, it appears that no positive results have been obtained from this operation."

In Denver, the Bureau's field office obtained permission to mail an anonymous letter signed, "A Concerned Mother," to the president of the Denver school board finding that Allen Taplen, a member of the party

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who in 1965, was a candidate for membership on the board, was a Communist. Mr. Taplen was not elected.

In 1968 the bureau circulated what it called an "uncomplimentary squib" about Fred Halstead, then the party's candidate for President, to military agencies to try to disrupt Mr. Halstead's attempt to campaign among American troops.

The documents revealed sev-

eral operations where the bureau secretly tried to bring members of the party under local police and state pressure. In December, 1961, the bureau determined that a party. Vacation retreat called Mountain Spring Camp in Washington, N. J., did not have a liquor license, yet it apparently served beer and other alcoholic beverages.

In nine months of secret manipulations, the papers show, always trying to keep the bureau's role anonymous, the Newark field office encouraged a raid on the camp by the New Jersey Alcoholic Beverage Board and the state police.

The raid was conducted on Sept. 1, 1962, over the Labor Day weekend. Sixteen bottles of liquor and 70 bottles of beer were "confiscated," and later two people pleaded guilty

to liquor violations. "It is the opinion of the N.Y.O. [New York Office]," one F.B.I. document read, "that this had been a very successful disruptive tactic with both immediate and long-term results reflecting adversely upon the S.W.P."

In a similar operation in 1966, the papers indicate, the F.B.I. made an anonymous telephone report to the New York State Department of Labor alleging that a print shop operated by the party was attempting to defraud the state by creating bogus unemployment insurance claims for party members.

The bureau, the documents show, later developed a covert contact with an official of the department who reported that it had discovered one violation. Spokesmen for the Socialist Workers said the print shop was conducted in 1966 or 1967.

The F.B.I. also made several attempts to put pressure on party members who were not connected with political activity or a given party function, the documents indicate.

In one case outlined in the documents, the F.B.I. wrote an anonymous letter, with full approval from the director's office, to the management of The Paterson (N. J.) Morning Call, a now-defunct daily newspaper. The letter informed the call that one of its reporters had allegedly been a member of the party.

A report from an informant, noted in the document, later said the reporter "is having difficulties at his job . . . because of his affiliation with the S.W.P." Another bureau document noted that the reporter "was told by his employer to discontinue his S.W.P. activities if he wants to hold his job

as a newspaper man."

The Newark F.B.I. field office, the papers show, asked permission to mail a letter attacking the reporter's personal mores to the father of a woman friend of his but was not given permission by Washington. Washington said the idea might be resubmitted at a later date.

The reporter, Murray Zuckoff, is now a staff member of the Jewish Telegraphic News Agency in New York. He said today in a telephone interview that he had no knowledge that the bureau had sent a letter to his employers and he believed that reports of bureau documents indicating that his job had been threatened were exaggerated. He said he thought that 1966 was a zenith year for his reporting and that he had remained with the Paterson paper until it was bought by another publication in 1969.

In another instance, according to the documents, the bureau "confidentially" got in touch with the Boy Scouts of America and tried to have a scoutmaster in Orange, N. J., removed from his job because his wife was a member of the party.

The bureau authorized the Newark office, recording to tie papers, to "orally" inform the Boy Scouts of the man's alleged subversive background, yet none of the documents indicate what the background was except that the man's wife was associated with the party. One F.B.I. report noted, "Newark has advised tint its files contain no public source information of a subversive nature concerning" the man.

In July, 1968, the documents disclose the Newark office reported that the man had not been registered as a scoutmaster.

The man's removal "from the scouting program, where he would have strong influence in the shaping of the minds of young boys, reflects the successful application of the disruption program for a worthy cause," the bureau report goes on.

The papers show that there was a constant attempt to disrupt internally the party's activities and to pit it against other organizations in the left and civil rights movement.

In another instance, in 1964, the F.B.I., according to the documents, mailed an anonymous letter to several newspapers alleging that the party was capitalizing on a Southern civil rights legal case for its own profit. There was no indication that any of the publications wrote an article as a result of the letter.

In connection with the same operation, the bureau took an account of a robbery of one of the principals in a defense committee from the Charlotte Observer of Feb. 27, 1964, and added a limerick written by F.B.I. agents to make it appear the robbery was a cover for the Socialist Workers to abscond with the funds. The F.B.I.'s anonymous verse went as follows:

Georgie-Porgie, down in
Monroe
Found himself alone with
the dough,
Called the Cops, and what
did he say?
Bad guys came and took it
away.

This piece of verse and the clipping also went to several newspapers and again there was no indication that it served as a base for a news article.